

Wolfe's Neck Center and Penobscot Nation Restore Indigenous Connections to Freeport with Maine State Grant

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Freeport, Maine – [Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment](#) is embarking on an important partnership with the Penobscot Nation exploring Indigenous stewardship of the land and waters in Freeport from time immemorial through the end of the Revolutionary War, funded by a grant from the Maine Semiquincentennial Commission.

The grant will fund *ReDiscovered & ReConnected: Penobscot People in Casco Bay and the formation of America*, a community-centered research project in partnership with the [Penobscot Nation Cultural and Historic Preservation Department](#) and staff at Wolfe's Neck Center. The grant also begins the work of Wolfe's Neck Center's newly created [Casco History Lab](#), which develops and shares place-based knowledge by providing physical connections to historic and cultural landscapes throughout Freeport's Harraseeket River Historic District.

ReDiscovered & ReConnected will start conversations and conduct archival research to begin the process of restoring Wabanaki access and relationships with ancestral territories, recover and activate archival and primary source documents about Indigenous histories of the region, and provide a platform for Penobscots to share the stories they feel are important. By comparing Wabanaki perspectives from time immemorial to the Revolutionary War and the founding of America in 1776, this project will explore how the many paths to liberty and freedom in America are complex and complicated, and have relevance today.

"This collaboration with the Casco History Lab recognizes the ongoing significance of the lands and waters of Freeport as Indigenous Homelands in the past, present, and future," says James Francis, director of the Penobscot Nation Cultural and Historic Preservation Department. "The grant provides an opportunity to amplify Indigenous perspectives in Freeport, a place where our history has been obscured for hundreds of years, and to explore questions about how colonization and the formation of the country of America disrupted Indigenous caretaking of this region."

Wolfe's Neck Center created the Casco History Lab in 2025 to surface the communal history and lessons of the land it stewards. The Lab is managed by Tilly Laskey, who brings decades of experience building reciprocal working relationships with Indigenous communities in museums. By working to understand the unique historical and cultural landscapes of Wolfe Neck Center's 626-acre campus through interdisciplinary research and collaborations, the Lab will offer novel

perspectives on regenerative food systems, including support for restoring relationships with the land through community and collaboration. *ReDiscovered & ReConnected* further collaborates with Wolfe Neck Woods State Park, extending the consultation area another 244 acres, providing a contiguous land base that is largely unchanged since colonial times.

“It was very important that the first Casco History Lab project center upon Indigenous peoples, because Wabanaki are the first people of this land,” says Laskey. “Generations of people have cared for the land in Freeport currently stewarded by Wolfe’s Neck Center. By working with the Penobscots on this, and other Tribal Nations in the future, we hope the Lab restores relationships to the land, connects farmers to the benefits of historical regenerative agricultural practices and embraces values of community and collaboration.”

The [Maine Semiquincentennial Commission received 120 grant applications](#) totalling over \$1 million in requested funds for projects that will “honor Maine’s past and inspire its future”. These grants fund inclusive, community-centered research spearheaded by museums, nonprofits and tribal entities. The 14 grantees include the **Wilson Museum**; the **Osher Map Library & Smith Center for Cartographic Education**; **nibezun**; **Youth Journalism International**; and the **Bangor Public Library**. Funding for the Maine Semiquincentennial Commission grants is provided by Maine State Archives and the Maine State Cultural Affairs Council.

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About the Casco History Lab at Wolfe’s Neck Center

The Casco History Lab at Wolfe’s Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment recovers memories of the lands and waterways of Maine’s Casco Bay, developing and sharing place-based knowledge projects about historic and cultural landscapes of the Harraseeket River Historic District in Freeport. The Lab finds relevance in the past by connecting local history to regional, national and global topics and promoting interdisciplinary research that inspires creative solutions for contemporary agricultural, environmental and social challenges.

About Wolfe’s Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment

Wolfe’s Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment is building an ecologically and economically resilient food system in the Northeast through regenerative agriculture. Based on a diversified, organic farm of over 600 conserved acres on the coast of Maine, our nonprofit works to accelerate

food systems change through public education, farmer training and market development, and agricultural research and innovation. With its demonstration farm, oceanfront campground, wooded trails and historic buildings, our vibrant campus serves as a unique hub for education and exploration.